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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000753

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DEPARTMENT FOR D, AF A/S FRAZER, AF SE NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG,
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2017

TAGS: KPKO PREL SU AU UN

SUBJECT: DIALOGUE WITH SUDANESE

REF: KHARTOUM 0636

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires R. Powers, reasons 1.4 (a) and (d)

¶1. (C) On May 10, embassy officer met with Sayed El Khatib to discuss the work of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) and to review a matrix prepared by the Embassy on the status of CPA implementation two years into the interim period. El Khatib attends AEC plenary meetings as the NCP representative. In the course of the meeting, El Khatib raised the question of a dialogue with the U.S. (reftel). Emboff replied that no formal response had been received from Washington. El Khatib indicated that the Sudanese are still interested in launching a dialogue, and are "ready when the U.S. is ready." Embassy continues to believe that dialogue with Sudanese would be constructive.

¶2. (C) Embassy provides the following background information on El Khatib. Sayed El Khatib, currently Director of the Center for Strategic Studies, was a participant in the Naivasha negotiations that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). He is one of the signatories of the agreement. Our contacts report that John Garang wanted El Khatib to have a ministerial portfolio in the GNU because of his depth of knowledge of the CPA. Although El Khatib did not receive a ministry, he continues as a leader in the NCP and an advisor. He is seen as being closely associated with Vice President Taha, but he reportedly maintains a good relationship with President Bashir.

POWERS